

# NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT



## *Office of Public Information*

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### **Three Spanish Court Interpreters to be Certified by the Nebraska Supreme Court**

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Supreme Court announces that three interpreters will become Nebraska Supreme Court Spanish Certified Court Interpreters as a result of successfully passing the National Center for State Court's Court Interpreter Consortium's oral certification exam

The new interpreters are Raul Escobar, Lincoln; Jo-Hanna Goettsche, Lincoln; and Belkin J. Gonzalez, Grand Island. Each will receive their certification and take their oath as Certified Court Interpreters in a ceremony on January 26, 2007, at 2:00 in Lincoln at the Justice and Law Enforcement Center located at 575 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, third floor, in District Courtroom # 37. Members of the public are invited to attend.

Justice John M. Gerrard of the Nebraska Supreme Court will preside over the ceremony and will speak of the need for providing equal access to the courts for all participants.

"It is crucial to the overall fairness of the system that judicial proceedings are completely and accurately interpreted for non-English speaking participants. The Nebraska Supreme Court is pleased with these interpreters who have worked so hard to become certified and for all of the other interpreters who are working toward certification," said Gerrard.

These three individuals join eighteen other previously certified Nebraska court interpreters who have successfully passed the oral certification exam, which is sponsored by the Consortium of the National Center for the State Courts.

Nebraska is one of thirty-six states who have joined the Consortium whose sole purpose to create court interpreter certification exams and administer those exams in order to provide for professional court interpreters for the member states.

*Contact Kenneth Wade at the Office of the State Court Administrator, 402-471-3730, concerning any aspect of the certification ceremony or the state interpreter program.*

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**Mr. Raul Escobar – Spanish Language**

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Raul Escobar was born in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico and lived there until he was eight years old. Raul and his family then moved to the United States where they took up residence in Lincoln, Nebraska. Raul attended and graduated from Lincoln Southeast High School. In 2006, Raul was married to his wife, Julie.

In 1999, Raul Escobar began court interpreting part-time while employed as a Loan Specialist for Nelnet. Two years later, he left Nelnet and started his own business—Escobar Interpreting and Translation Service. Mr. Escobar currently works with the courts and probation in Lancaster, Seward, Saline, Saunders, Otoe, Jefferson, Thayer, and Fillmore counties as well as the Lancaster County Public Defenders' office, the Federal Public Defender's office in Lincoln, and private attorneys throughout Lincoln and Omaha.

Mr. Escobar is active in his community. For three years, he co-facilitated a weekly Batterers Intervention Program in Spanish and was a member of the Immigrant Rights Network. Mr. Escobar continues to work with the Lancaster County Child Guidance Center as an interpreter for children and families in counseling, participate as a board member of the Family Violence Council, and plays basketball with residents at the Lincoln Regional Center. Raul enjoys playing City Recreation softball, collecting model cars, and climbing Colorado's Fourteeners.

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**Ms. Jo-Hanna Goettsche – Spanish Language**

402-465-9091, Lincoln, NE

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Jo-Hanna was born and raised in Ponce, Puerto Rico. She attended the Mayagüez Campus of the University of Puerto Rico where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. After she came to the United States she went on to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she met her future husband, Corey. Jo-Hanna graduated with a Master of Science in General Engineering. They relocated to the Pacific Northwest near Seattle for Jo-Hanna's new job at Boeing. They came to Nebraska in 2000 to spend more time with their family. Their first child, Ana María, was born in 2000. Jo-Hanna was employed by the Organic Crop Improvement Association in 2002. Her employment led to more responsibilities until she was doing English-Spanish translations, coordinating the Latin American inspectors in OCIA's Organic Inspector Program, and handling the document control system. She traveled with her job to Nicaragua and El Salvador. Most recently, Jo-Hanna has begun working at the Unemployment Insurance Claims Center, taking claims from English and Spanish speakers.

Additionally, Jo-Hanna has been doing freelance translation work. Examples of her work include a safety manual translated to English, proofreading an operations manual for a fast-food restaurant, and the translation of copy for promotional posters. She has also done pro bono work for KidAngel Foundation and the Cystic Fibrosis Worldwide newsletter. She belongs to NATI and ATA. In her spare time, Jo-Hanna makes and sells accessories of her own design.

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**Ms. Belkin Gonzalez – Spanish Language**

308-380-3131, Grand Island, NE

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Belkin J. Gonzalez was born and raised in Guatemala City, Guatemala, where she earned her high school diploma. Belkin attended college in Guatemala to become a bilingual secretary. After coming to the United States, Belkin has taken several hours of training at interpreter workshops sponsored by the Nebraska Supreme Court. She also received personal telephonic tutoring with Mr. Agustin de LaMora, a federal certified court interpreter. Belkin attended the Community College in Grand Island where she earned a certificate of assistance as a Medical Interpreter. Her future plans include becoming a Paralegal.

Belkin has been employed as an interpreter by the Hall county courts since 2000. She also interprets for the Public Defenders office, Probation Office, and the Hall County Jail. She has been actively employed as an interpreter doing depositions, child support proceedings, jury trials and private practice. Belkin also works part time with CN-Ahec as a medical interpreter. She is involved in doing volunteer interpreting for several organizations. Her most recent was an interpretation for the Mission of Mercy where several hundred people were able to receive free dental service. She also volunteers as an interpreter for the local Third City Community Clinic.

Belkin has lived in Grand Island since 1994. She is very close to her family, her mother and two sisters and in particular her thirteen year old son, Manual who is the “light of my eyes”.

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